

Message Text

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44

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 OMB-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

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FM AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1103

INFO AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

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AMEMBASSY OSLO

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PGOV SW

SUBJECT: PALME GOVERNMENT AND OPPOSITION AGREE ON ORGANIZATION
OF NEW PARLIAMENT

SUMMARY: FIVE PARTIES REPRESENTED IN NEW RIKSDAG CONVENING
IN JANUARY ANNOUNCE AGREEMENT ON OFFICERS OF NEW PARLIAMENT
AND COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS, THEREBY AVOIDING IMMEDIATE CLASH
BETWEEN EVENLY MATCHED GOVERNMENT AND OPPOSITION BLOCS.
SUCCESSFUL COMPROMISE INDICATES BOURGEOIS BLOC HAS NO
STOMACH FOR FORCING EARLY SHOWDOWN AND PALME GOVERNMENT,
WITH NO MAJORITY, IS CERTAIN TO SURVIVE AT LEAST FAR INTO
1974. END SUMMARY.

BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED

1. NEW RIKSDAG, WITH 175-175 STALEMATE BETWEEN SOCIALIST
(PALME-LED) AND BOURGEOIS (OPPOSITION) BLOCS, WILL NOT
CONVENE UNTIL MID-JANUARY, BUT IT HAS ALREADY AVERTED A
MAJOR TEST OF WILLS. THE FIVE PARTIES REPRESENTED IN
NEW RIKSDAG ANNOUNCED DEC. 5 AGREEMENT ON SPEAKER AND
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VICE-SPEAKERS OF THE HOUSE AND ON DIVISION OF ASSIGNMENTS

IN RIKSDAG'S 16 STANDING COMMITTEES OF 15 MEMBERS EACH. AGREEMENT WAS THE PRODUCT OF HORSE-TRADING SESSIONS OVER PERIOD OF WEEKS, A PROCESS IN WHICH ALL PARTIES SHOWED THEMSELVES COMMITTED TO A COMPROMISE WHICH WOULD FAIRLY REFLECT DEAD HEAT IN SEPTEMBER ELECTIONS.

2. SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY WILL RETAIN POST OF SPEAKER OF RIKSDAG WITH CENTER, MODERATE AND LIBERAL PARTIES EACH GETTING A VICE-SPEAKER. OPPOSITION CONCESSION HERE WAS OFFSET BY AWARDING OF NINE OF 16 COMMITTEE CHAIRMANSHIPS TO REPRESENTATIVES FROM BOURGEOIS SIDE OF THE AISLE. HOWEVER, THE TWO BLOCS DIVIDED UP MAJORITY CONTROL OF COMMITTEES EXACTLY EVENLY, I.E. SOCIALIST BLOC WILL HAVE 8-7 MAJORITY ON EIGHT COMMITTEES AND BOURGEOIS BLOC 8-7 EDGE ON EIGHT OTHERS.

3. OF 240 PLACES ON THE 16 COMMITTEES, SOCIALIST AND BOURGEOIS BLOCS WERE EACH ASSIGNED 120. SOCDEM PARTY AGREED WITH ITS SILENT PARTNER, LEFT COMMUNIST PARTY (VPK), TO TAKE 107 SLOTS AND GIVE VPK 13. THUS, VPK WILL SIT ON 13 COMMITTEES BUT WILL HAVE NO PLACE ON SENSITIVE FOREIGN AFFAIRS, DEFENSE AND FINANCE COMMITTEES. HOWEVER, COMMUNISTS HAVE GAINED SEATS ON IMPORTANT TAX AND CONSTITUTION COMMITTEES, THUS INDICATING THEIR INCREASED STRENGTH IN NEW RIKSDAG. END UNCLASSIFIED.

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COMMENT: THIS SKILLFUL COMPROMISE WILL ENABLE NEW RIKSDAG TO ORGANIZE PROMPTLY AND FUNCTION NORMALLY. PALME GOVERNMENT, WHICH WILL HAVE MAJORITY ON COMMITTEES WHERE ANY MAJOR LEGISLATION IS LIKELY TO ORIGINATE, SHOULD BE ABLE TO OPERATE WITH A ZERO MAJORITY OVERALL. ONLY CAVEAT IS THAT BOURGEOIS PARTIES HAVE OPTION TO SELECT A MAJOR ISSUE (1974-75 BUDGET, FOR EXAMPLE) AND BY PERFECT UNITY BLOCK LEGISLATION AND THEREBY RENDER GOVERNMENT IMPOTENT. HOWEVER, NEITHER CENTER NOR LIBERAL LEADERSHIPS SEEM TO BE PLANNING SUCH TACTICS FOR THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE. MEANING OF SLICK DEC. 5 COMPROMISE IS TACIT AGREEMENT TO LET PALME GOVERN-
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PERHAPS EVEN UNTIL NEXT REGULAR ELECTION IN 1976.
OLSEN

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